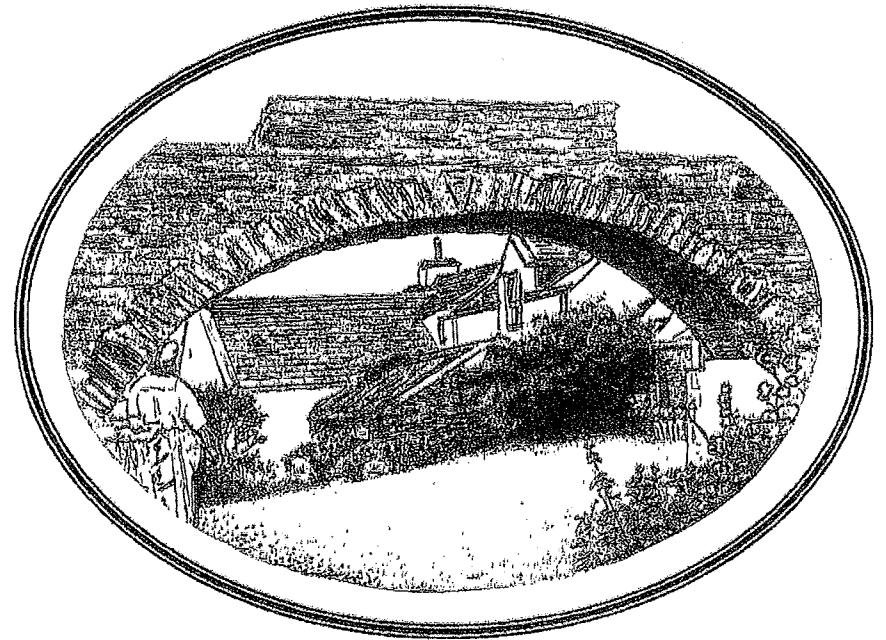


Orkney Heritage Society



Newsletter 2005/2006

Objectives of the Orkney Heritage Society.

The aims of the Society are to promote and encourage the following objectives by charitable means but not otherwise:

- a) To stimulate public interest in, and care for the beauty, history and character of Orkney.
- b) To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- c) To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Orkney.
- d) To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, conferences, publicity and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

Committee 2005-6

President	Mr I. M. Heddle, Clethan, Ireland Road, Stenness
Vice President	Mr A. J. Firth, Edan, Berstane Road, Kirkwall
Chairman	Mrs A. Brundle, Hillside School, Twatt, Orkney
Vice Chairman	Mr T. Rendall, 22, Craigie Crescent, Kirkwall
Secretary	Mrs S. Wenham, Langwell, Orphir
Treasurer	M/s I. Scholes, Norderey, Holm Branch Road, Kirkwall
Membership - Secretary	Mr W. Groundwater, Clowigar, St. Ola
	Mrs M. Banks, Mayfield, St. Margaret's Hope
	Mr B. M. Clark, Westwood, Berstane Rd., Kirkwall
	Mrs H. M. Firth, Edan, Berstane Road, Kirkwall
	Mrs C. Foden, Cubbie Roo, Cromwell Rd. Kirkwall
	Mrs S. J. Gibbon, 24, High Street, Kirkwall
	Mr N. Leask, Smerquoy, St. Ola
	Mr. N. McCance, West End House, Burray
	Mrs L. Tait, 2, Quoyburray Farm, Tankerness
	Mr A. Tulloch, 29, Reid Crescent, Kirkwall

Front Cover:- Upper Housegarth, Quoyloo, from back

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Editorial

Aberdeen trained retired Doctors George McDonald, along with Leslie Florence, who was having a nostalgic trip to Aberdeen from his home of many years in New Zealand, had enjoyed this long-planned first trip to Shetland and Orkney so much that we asked George to write an article about it. This resulted in a most interesting and full account but unfortunately there is no room for it all, or for the photographs he sent. Both George and Leslie said that the trip would have been worth it for the sheer welcoming friendliness of people and the wonderful fresh food everywhere in both groups of islands, let alone the wonderful scenery. We hope you enjoy reading it.

It was a joy to receive an article in advance for this publication as it would be from anyone else with wartime or other training experiences a long way from home. Who is going to be next?

Once again we must thank all our contributors for such a wealth of interesting articles – especially when one contributor suggested that there might be the makings of another series for future Newsletters. Hilda and I would also like to express our gratitude to Liz Gilmore for all her help.

Margaret Street, who kindly supplied the photograph of Samuel Lang's gravestone in Edinburgh, is a great advocate for Orkney. One of her many Scotland-wide projects is her current campaign for a blue plaque to be placed on John Rae's London house. She fully supports Sandy's thoughts in his article on page 5. We hope that you feel the same.

Unforeseen circumstances have, sadly, led to the resignation of Bill Hamilton from the committee. Anne Brundle has taken on the Chairmanship and Tom Rendall the Vice Chair until the next A.G.M. On behalf of the Society may we thank Bill for all the time he has given to the Society over the years and to Anne and Tom as they take over the reins.

Many books on Orkney have been published this year and this is becoming a rising trend. The reviews and lists may help you choose.

Iris Heddle and Hilda Firth.

Chairman's Report 2004 – 2005 by Bill Hamilton

At the AGM in November 2004 two new committee members were elected, Sarah Jane Gibbon and Kim Foden. At present the membership of the society stands at around 180. Prior to the increase in subscription rates last year a number of members took the opportunity to take out life membership. As a result about 75% of the members are now life members.

The relocation of the Groatie Hoose to Tankerness House Garden finally came to fruition. This has been an interest of the Heritage Society for many years and the Society was pleased to assist Kirkwall Community Council in this project. Our principal contribution was to secure about £11000 in grants. The project obviously captured the imagination of one of our funders, the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, as it featured as one of their highlighted projects in their annual report.

The Groatie Hoose opening ceremony took place on 4 June when Bryce Wilson unveiled the commemorative plaque and gave an informative address on the history of the Hoose and Pirate Gow. Recently the Groatie Hoose project received a commendation in the Dynamic Place Awards sponsored by Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The memorial to George Mackay Brown in Makars' Court in Edinburgh, to which the Society contributed, was unveiled in October 2005. Thus George Mackay Brown joins such luminaries of Scottish literature as Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson.

The Heritage Section of the Community Plan (Orkney 2020) was rather put on hold due to uncertainties at the national level. However the local stakeholders are again meeting regularly. The Heritage Society has agreed to write the introductory chapter of the Local Heritage Plan, giving a community view of heritage.

Our website, hosted by orkneycommunities.co.uk, continues to develop slowly and a news page has been added during the past year. The number of visitors to the website varies considerably from day to day but has averaged about 22 per day over the past month. The Heritage Society continues to be represented on the Board of Management of orkneycommunities.co.uk.

Over the year the Society has organised a number of talks and lectures and has been pleased to sponsor a couple of talks during Scottish Archaeology Month. In the past some talks have been organised at rather short notice. We have been determined to do better and I am pleased to report that, thanks to the efforts of a small sub-committee, we now have a programme of events for the coming months.

* Since this started earlier in the year, the remainder are listed below.

ur regular programme of activities has continued. These include the Eynhallow trip, the Grimond, Fereday and Linklater Awards and representation on the Countryside Committee, which are the subjects of reports by other members of the Committee. We continue to make representations on planning applications where appropriate.

Finally I wish to thank the committee members for their help during the past year and all members who have continued to support the Society.

*Changes in venues and times are inevitable in the holiday season so please check local media. The remainder of events are:-

9th May - *The Mona Sinclair Lecture on Place names* by Doreen Waugh in the Supper Room of Kirkwall Town Hall.

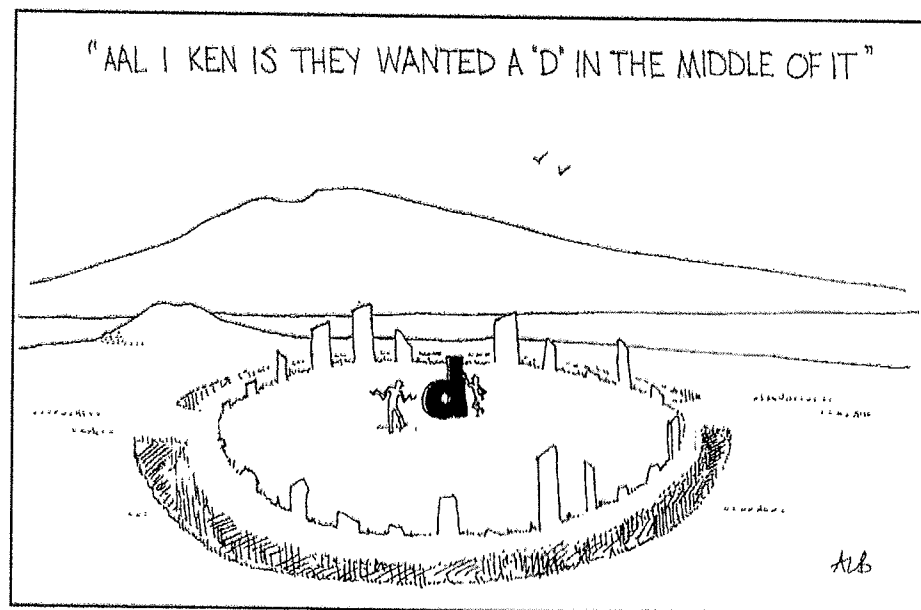
23rd May - *Peeling Back the Layers to an iron Age Landscape* by Doreen Lamb

13th June *Orkney Buildings - What makes them special?* in the Supper Room of Kirkwall Town Hall.

10th July - *The Eynhallow Trip* See page 27 for details.

There will be a talk in August and talks and events in connection with Archæology Month in September.

Cartoon by Anne Brundle

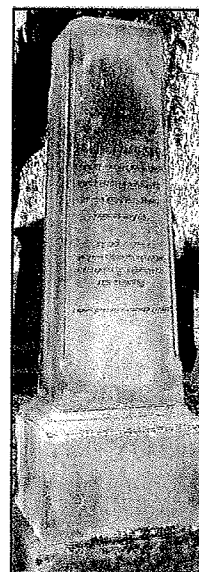


Samuel Laing of Papdale. by Sandy Firth

Our 2002 Newsletter carried details of Samuel Laing of Papdale's autobiography and his legacy to Orkney. In two years time we will commemorate the 140th anniversary of his death and there is a strong feeling that a simple memorial should be placed in St. Magnus Cathedral in his memory.

Laing was probably the most popular Provost Kirkwall has ever had. He was the guiding influence who saw the way through the religious bickering which tore the congregations of the old established church apart. But for his presence and generosity we would probably not have the Cathedral as we know it today. When situations arose within the fragmenting congregations it was Laing who gave land for the new church and denomination buildings which were built. He also gave the land on which Kirkwall Grammar School (Orkney Islands Council building) was built.

As a laird he was among the leaders in 'improving' his estates and indeed saw to it that all his poorer tenants had 3 acres of land, at £5 per year, to use as they pleased. He encouraged the introduction of turnips as winter feed for livestock. It was he who, along with a brother in Jamaica and another business partner, started the herring fishing industry in Stronsay. In fact Orkney's industrial fishing stemmed from this enterprise as it escalated and developed with the arrival of bigger and better boats. When the kelp industry was threatened he went, at his own expense, to London to fight Orkney's cause in Parliament.



The final collapse of the kelp industry and general trade stagnation saw Laing leave Orkney and live in Norway where he could live within his means. He eventually sold his estates and his creditors were paid back in full. While in Norway he fell in love with both the country and its history. He translated the 'Heimskringla' (the sagas of the Norse Kings) into English for the very first time. The success of this work can be seen by the fact that his translation remained in print until the 1990s. He also wrote popular travel descriptions of countries he stayed in and his work on various aspects of European education at that time are still used for reference and research. As so often is the case Samuel Laing is "Unsung in his own land". Much of his earlier European adventures are the stuff of films, and his later bequests in literature and culture should surely be recognised by fellow Orcadians. I am among those who would like to see some remembrance of him in St. Magnus Cathedral, the building he saved.

Inset is of Samuel Laing's gravestone in Edinburgh

GEORGE MACKAY BROWN: TEN YEARS ON

It is not uncommon for a writer to suffer a period of neglect in the years following his death. The eulogies and personal tributes give way to a more rigorous critical estimate of his work, and public interest begins to wane as the world moves on. Assuredly this has not been the case with George Mackay Brown, whose reputation has suffered little if any decline during these ten posthumous years. Perhaps the chief reason for his remarkable staying power is the sheer quantity and quality of the work he was producing right up to the end of his life - a wonderful cornucopia of poems, stories, essays and memoirs. Three new books appeared almost together within weeks of his death: they included a fine collection of new poems entitled **Following a Lark**, a paperback edition of his **Selected Poems**, and the fruits of his last collaboration with Gunnie Moberg, Orkney **Pictures and Poems**.

Among the many good poems in *Following a Lark* is one which was to provide the epitaph engraved on George's headstone:

Here is a work for poets -
Carve the runes
Then be content with silence

Although its position at the end of this collection and its distinctly valedictory tone suggest that this was perhaps intended as the poet's final utterance, he had in fact written it five years earlier at the time of his 70th birthday, along with these lines celebrating his recovery from a near mortal illness, and celebrating also his imminent arrival at "the seventieth stone":

The road winds uphill, but
A wonder will be to sit
On the stone at last -
One star in the west.

These lovely poems sit comfortably beside George's elegiac sonnet to his fellow poet Robert Rendall, and his moving elegy to Attie Campbell, a much loved drinking companion in bygone days:

Where do you wander now, old friend?
Where do you drink?
Few inns better than Hamnavoe bar,
Few better stories, I think....

Twelve months later came the first of ten posthumous works selected from the prolific output of his last years. His Autobiography **For the Islands I Sing** was given its title by his editors who borrowed it from the first verse of his first published collection, **The Storm**. It was followed in turn by a collection of short stories **The Island of the**

Women, a miscellany entitled **Northern Lights** which covered fifty years of the author's prose and poetry, from 1946 to 96, and a last poetry collection called **Travellers**. In addition there have been four special editions of hitherto unpublished works by GMB, beautifully produced by the gifted artist and book designer Rosemary Roberts. Altogether this has been a busy and rewarding ten years for George's editors and, more importantly, his readers.

It is also gratifying to record that John Murray is not the only publishing house to have maintained an interest in George's work. Birlinn (Polygon) have acquired the titles to several important texts, and have wasted no time in getting **Greenvoe** and **Hawkfall** back into print, while the London firm of Savage has reprinted **Letters From Hamnavoe** and **Under Brinkie's Brae** to accompany **Rockpools and Daffodils** and thus restore the much loved Orcadian trilogy. More reprints are in the pipeline.

Meantime Sir Peter Maxwell Davies has continued to find musical inspiration in the poetry of George Mackay Brown, including numerous pieces from **Voyages** and **Wreck of the Archangel**, and complete song cycles from **Following a Lark** and from that ever bounteous source, **Fishermen With Ploughs**. Though Max is by no means the only composer to have been inspired by George's poetry, he is undoubtedly the most prolific and the most successful in getting to the heart of the poet's message.

Last year the literary editor of one of our national papers wrote an article praising the success of Scottish writers in having some of their best books translated abroad. Regrettably, one name was conspicuous by its absence. If the editor had done his homework properly, he would have noted that GMB has been translated into at least a dozen languages, including Icelandic and Esperanto, and that the Germans, Italians and Japanese have each managed to translate four of his books in the space of four years. Not much sign of a waning reputation in these figures!

Two summers ago saw the publication of the first comprehensive study of George's work in nearly thirty years. It is called **Interrogation of Silence**, and takes its title from a well known poem by George which was one of London's **Poems on the Underground** in 1998. This new critical study is an illuminating and perceptive work by two of the poet's closest friends, Brian Murray and his daughter Rowena.

Last year's big event was of course the publication in June of the long-awaited **Collected Poems of George Mackay Brown**. It will be joined this spring by George's official biography written by Maggie Fergusson.

For more information about the poet and his works, and about the impending Anniversary celebrations, you should tune into the George Mackay Brown website, edited with great flair and dedication for the past five years by Sue Tordoff.

www.georgemackaybrown.co.uk

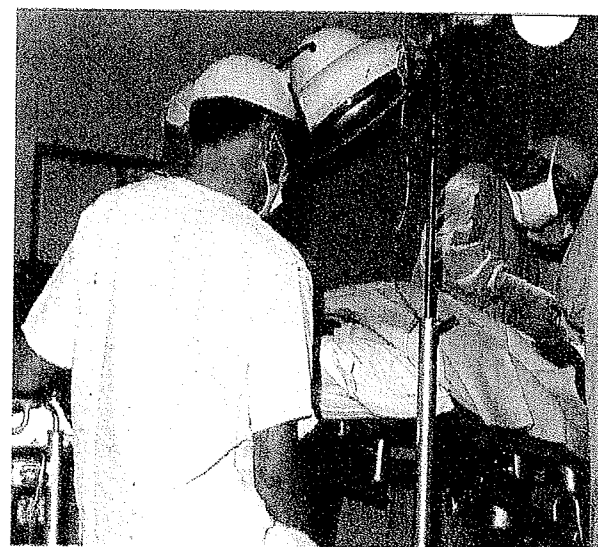
Long Way from Home by Dr Ian Hourston

In my early years in the Royal Air Force I sometimes wondered if I was doing something terribly wrong: my superiors seemed forever intent on packing me off to the back of beyond. As a medical officer of only a few months' standing I had a call from someone at Group HQ who tried to persuade me to volunteer for the British Antarctic Survey. "You come from the frozen north," he said helpfully, "why not try the frozen south?" I might even have succumbed had I not been intensively courting my future wife at the time. I managed to beat him off. A year or so later a senior officer rang to say I was to be groomed for stardom as the MO with the RAF A-bomb-monitoring unit on Christmas Island in the Pacific. He told me the date I was due to be there, then rather as an afterthought asked if there was any reason why I couldn't comply. I wasn't sure what would count as a reason for non-compliance, but diffidently pointed out that the date he had just mentioned happened to be the possible date of delivery of my first-born child. "Oh bugger!" said he by way of congratulation, "That's it then. I'll have to go to the next on my list." I didn't ask how many had been on the list before he got to me, but merely observed that it was a rather dubious *estimated* date and still some months away. He said, "I know, but once an MO is warned for posting to Christmas Island he has to undergo a crash course in anaesthetics. After that, if he can't go for any reason – like childbirth problems – there isn't time to put anyone else through the course." His parting shot was to say he would certainly be sending me somewhere overseas soon.

Sure enough, with the baby safely born I was detached for three months to Masira, a desert island off the coast of Oman, which was a staging-post for RAF aircraft in the Arabian Peninsula. That fortunately led on to a full tour of duty, with my family, in Aden. Eighteen months or so after my return to the UK the now seemingly inevitable call came again: would I care to volunteer for a nine-month secondment to Cable & Wireless in Ascension Island (unaccompanied by family of course)? I thought for a moment before replying, "If you *order* me to go I'll go willingly, but if you expect me to go home and say to my family 'guess what I just volunteered to do' you're wrong." There was some humming and hawing at the other end. I could imagine them saying, "That Hourston fellow's becoming a bit of a pain". But they reluctantly backed off and went to look for someone else. Had my family and I known what was coming, my small 'victory' might have looked like a mistake.

A posting notice arrived at my RAF station: I was to be posted unaccompanied to RAF Gan in the Maldiv Islands for a year. Say 'no' to nine months on one Godforsaken island and they give you *twelve* months on another!

Of course, Gan turned out to be by no means a Godforsaken island – more of a tropical paradise – and led to my family and me going on to have a splendid and eventful tour in Singapore, but we didn't know that then. So at last it was my turn to go on that crash course in anaesthetics. It was supposed to last six weeks, at an RAF hospital, but in my case it straddled the Christmas-New Year period when little or no elective surgery was carried out and they sent me home, so I got barely a month. On the strength of this rudimentary experience I administered over 400 general anaesthetics to unsuspecting Maldivians (some with horrendous surgical conditions) without serious mishap. Does fortune favour the foolhardy? But I never learned to like anaesthetics as a way of life: it's too much a reversal of normal practice where you would endeavour to wake up the unconscious rather than stun the alert.



Gan was an important British route station.). But that's another story, or couple of stories, and not for telling here.

In my more megalomaniac moments I like to think the real reason I seemed to get an inordinate number of requests to take myself off to remote specks on the face of the planet was that someone somewhere had conceived the idea that I was a 'safe pair of hands'. But it seems unlikely. Anyhow, in retrospect I wouldn't want to change any of it.

Inset photograph is of Dr. Hourston - on left - administering an anaesthetic in Gan.

The Pow Wow of 2005 by Mrs. Kim (Twatt) Foden

In the summer of 1751 nineteen year old Magnus Twatt, like so many before him, sailed from Stromness to join the Hudson's Bay Company as a labourer. Magnus rose through the ranks of the company during thirty years of service, only returning home for one year. He married a First Nations Cree wife and they had several children.

Thirty one years after Magnus's death, in 1832, James Drever was born at Pettigibby in Westray. At eighteen years of age he, too, bid farewell to the islands and headed across the Atlantic in the service of the same company. And, like Magnus and so many of the Orkney men, he found a Cree wife, daughter of Chief Mistawasis.

By this time, life for the First Nations people was turning bad. The white people were encroaching on their traditional hunting grounds. Buffalo and beaver were all but wiped out. Telegraph wires had been strung across the plains and the railway would soon follow. The chiefs decided it was time to try to negotiate with the Queen's commissioners for land of their own in order to preserve their way of life.

Subsequently in August 1876 Magnus Twatt's grandson, William Twatt (Cree name Chief Ahyatuskumikinum), Chief Mistawasis and seven other chiefs met with the Commissioner at Fort Carlton on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River to thrash out the terms of Treaty Six. These men were both signatories on behalf of their bands (usually extended family). Treaty Six emerged as one of the best negotiated treaties. However, as was always the case, the rug was pulled out from under the native people and by the end of that century their lives had changed forever.

There has been much bitterness and hatred of the white people among the native population, understandably, but in 2004 the Chief and council at Sturgeon Lake First Nation (formerly the William Twatt Band) decided to assist a group from that reserve to go on a pilgrimage to visit the islands their grandfather had come from so long ago.

Orkney Heritage Society contributed to the funding for this trip. The group was accompanied by Elder Paul Dreaver, descendant of James Drever of Westray, and a group of lecturers and researchers from the First Nations University of Canada. Their aim was to meet the people of Orkney and explore our common heritage. They felt that by examining their past they could more confidently move forward. They happily shared part of their culture with us Orcadians through dance, song, storytelling and lectures.

The success of the trip led the Chief and council to invite "the people of Orkney, or their representatives" to their annual Pow Wow.



The "family" outside the Pickaquoy Centre, Kirkwall.

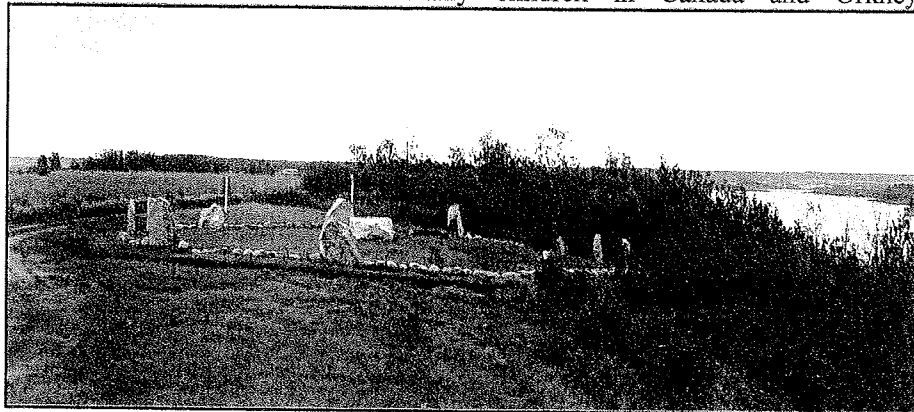
Nine people made the journey, including Johnnie Meil, "elder" of the Twatt family and his wife, Isabel, Leslie Manson, Orkney's Director of Education, Marita Luck, myself and husband, Robert, our son, Alistair and Councillor Michael Drever along with his wife, Inga who represented both the Drever family and Orkney Islands Council. All agree it was an amazing experience. We had not been given any guidelines. Our hosts wanted us to learn by experience which became an arduous and steep learning curve, memorable and great.

I was fortunate to be invited to attend a sweat. The sweat and ceremony achieve a cleansing of the mind, body and the soul. The sweat lodge is a low dome structure, completely dark inside. Extreme heat is created by bringing in red-hot stones which the elder will splash with water as he prays and talks. I slept soundly that night.

The Orcadian group were invited to join the Grand Opening of the 2005 Pow Wow by marching into the harbour with the Chief and council, Pow Wow Committee, elders, war veterans and the dancers. They welcomed us with speeches and had us judge the "special" dances to honour the Orkney visitors. For two days and evenings dancers and drummers competed in a swirl of colour and skill while the drums beat and the singers tore at our hearts.

We were asked to meet at the Pow Wow ground on Saturday morning. All was mystery, and the pace was slower, more sombre. We were driven to a sacred place. The men formed a circle, sitting on the ground where Alistair was invited to join them in a pipe ceremony. The pipe was lit and Elder Bill Ermine called upon

the Creator to witness that his commands were being followed in the giving of smoke offerings. The mouthpiece swung around with the sun to the four points of the compass where the spirit powers to be addressed dwell. The elder prayed in Cree, but explained that he prayed for the two communities who had come together there. He prayed that we could help each other, learn from our different cultures and that the bonds between us would become stronger. We remembered the ancestors and also their many children in Canada and Orkney..



We were then driven along the banks of Sturgeon Lake to Asini Kanipawit, The Place where the Rocks Stand. There a stone circle of huge limestone boulders had been created. Isabel, who had known nothing of this, had with her a bag of stones from Warbeth. The Orkney visitors were asked to place these stones round the circle.

I will end with words from the sign at that beautiful place



"Asini Kanipawit was initiated after some members of Sturgeon Lake First Nation visited the Ring of Brodgar in Orkney in the summer of 2004. Asini Kanipawit was built to commemorate the visit of our friends and relatives from Orkney including Kim (Twatt) Foden and others who came to Sturgeon Lake First Nation Pow Wow July 22 – 24, 2005. Asini Kanipawit is dedicated to our common ancestors."

An Orcadian Scholastic Adventure by Linda Tait

In December 1961 I accepted a teaching post from the Director of Education, Mr Mack, who told me to report to Mr. MacLennan at the two-teacher Birsay Public School. This scholastic adventure started on a dark and snowy January morning; my briefcase packed, make-up intact and hair back-combed to within an inch of my life, when it suddenly dawned on me that I hadn't a clue where the Oxta School was! Miraculously I arrived on time, if a little fraught, to be warmly welcomed by the headmaster, Wullie MacLennan, with the teapot in hand.

Wullie had been brought up in St Andrews and had walked from Stensick to Kirkwall Grammar School for most of his Secondary education, although he told me that he eventually acquired an old bicycle. We hit it off straight away. I enjoyed his quiet, pleasant and studious manner coupled with an impish sense of humour. I'm sure he liked my outrageous and extrovert personality coupled with the ignorance and confidence of my youth.

Unlike today, at no time during my term's employment did I encounter Itinerant Specialist teachers. During the first week Wullie let me know that I was expected to teach Art, Music, Sewing and Knitting. I swallowed hard and just managed to squeak out a very feeble "Yes." I was delighted to do the first two but as for sewing and knitting – I was the only student at Moray House who'd been given the unheard of "E" in the subject, much to the chagrin of my mother who was a trained dressmaker.

With apprehension I awaited the next visit of the County Adviser in Homecraft, Mrs Firth – our Vice President's mother. She arrived the following Tuesday when I had to reveal my lack of handicraft skills. However, she quickly and kindly allayed my fears by suggesting that pupils Isobel Harvey and Kathleen Bews would willingly help and guide me – which they did most ably.

Another key figure at the Oxta School was the delightful Mrs. Moar who served the lunches which were transported from the Dounby Junior Secondary School. Pupils ate at their desks which were protected by patterned oilcloth squares.

Although fifty miles' travelling each day in my little Ford Anglia was rather tiring, I did enjoy the sizeable travel allowance which temporary teachers received, as it increased my monthly salary from £40 to £50.

My time in Birsay was thoroughly enjoyable. I had sixteen pupils within classes 1- 4. The bairns were friendly, well-informed, exceptionally well behaved and most diligent. However, I was looking for a permanent teaching post. I was offered just that, as assistant to Mrs Walker at the Tankerness Public School, which in contrast to Oxta, was on the doorstep of my home at Upper Quoyburray.

Aims of the new Nordic centre by Donna Heddle

The Orkney and Shetland Islands are identified primarily in terms of their Nordic cultural and linguistic heritage. They are positioned at the centre of the Nordic world and combine a wealth of archaeological and cultural heritage with reasonable accessibility for scholars from Nordic countries, as well as Scotland, England, Germany, and USA. The creation of a Centre for Nordic Studies, based at Orkney College with a presence at Shetland College, encompasses an identified aim listed in the UHI (now UHI Millennium Institute) Linguistic and Cultural Identity Report of September 1998 as follows,

UHI will...take special responsibility for Shetlandic and Orcadian in the areas of research, collation, lexicography and the development of resources and prerequisites for education in order to provide centres for Shetlandic and Orcadian analogous to that provided for Faroese by the Faroese University...

Other identified UHI aims covered by this project are the establishment of links with other academic communities, both here and abroad, and the establishment of a distinct research identity for UHI.

The Centre for Nordic Studies will also include an Orkney and Shetland archive to which students, both under and postgraduate will add their work. This archive will take the same form as the Department of Faroese at the University of the Faroe Islands and will include maps, texts, sound recordings, pictures, lexicographical material and so on.

It will also house research into producing a dictionary of Orkney and Shetlandic words with definitions in the same language variants, complementing earlier dictionary work with definitions in English, Danish, and Faeroese. Ultimately, the Centre will seek to host a Nordic Studies conference on a regular basis and to publish new texts.

- **Specific benefits to Orkney and Shetland:** preservation of organic heritage; increased community involvement in the generation and study of local heritage in all its forms; and further development of cultural and academic tourism with its concomitant impact on the community.

- **Specific benefits to Orkney and Shetland Colleges are:** a major benefit in the implementation of a research strategy; a world research profile; increased overseas student numbers, with overseas fees; and more usage by the general public as they access the information.

- **Specific benefits to UHI are:** a recognised research centre in an area of linguistic and cultural identity to which they have pledged support; the implementation of the aims stated above; and most importantly, an increase in research student numbers directly affecting the time scale for achieving university status.

Laura Grimond Awards 2005 by Ian Heddle

Each time we advertise the awards scheme and ask for entries, we wonder what the response may be. There now appears to be an average of about ten or twelve which works out very well for the visiting we have to do, as it all has to be done between other commitments and if ferries are involved, we like to get back home again! We sort out the various entries into districts to minimise travelling and it usually works out quite comfortably. This time we went on three trips. On June 6th we were at Sebay Mill, the Inn, Holm and the Smithy, S. Ronaldsay. On June 27th we went to Westray to the Kirk and to the new Care Centre, to be followed on July 7th by Gunns Close in Kirkwall, Murrayfield in Finstown, Corks in Marwick and Upper Housegarth in Quoylooloo.

Each site is photographed and a video is taken so that the judges may all consider everything fairly. Awards are given when all the judges agree on the high quality. Highly Commended is given when it is felt that Award quality has not been reached. Commended is given when there is more criticism, but we consider that a great effort has been made.

My wife, Iris, produces the certificates and does the calligraphy. They are then signed by all the judges and framed. The entire Laura Grimond Awards scheme was started as a memorial to Lady Grimond and, from the beginning I said I would like to be responsible for it. It has become an established part of Orkney's biennial calendar. The Orkney Heritage Society runs it without any financial help whatever from any other body and the sole purpose is to try to encourage good design and beauty.

We greatly appreciate the help we get from our professional judges who simply do NOT vote if their own work is involved.

Here are brief comments on the entries in the order of our visits.

Sebay Mill Huge conservation and conversion. Award.

The Inn, Holm Rebuilt after fire. Rainwater goods on front elevation are too prominent. Commendation.

The Smithy, S. Ronaldsay. A working smithy conserved with care. H Com.

The Kirk, Westray. Huge local community effort, now a multi-purpose kirk Award.

Care Centre, Westray. Fine new facility for the community. Landscaping delayed by Oyster-Catcher's nest! H Com.

Gunns Close, KW. A piece of old Kirkwall saved. H Com.

Murrayfield, Finstown. Fine new house. A few little comments. H Com.

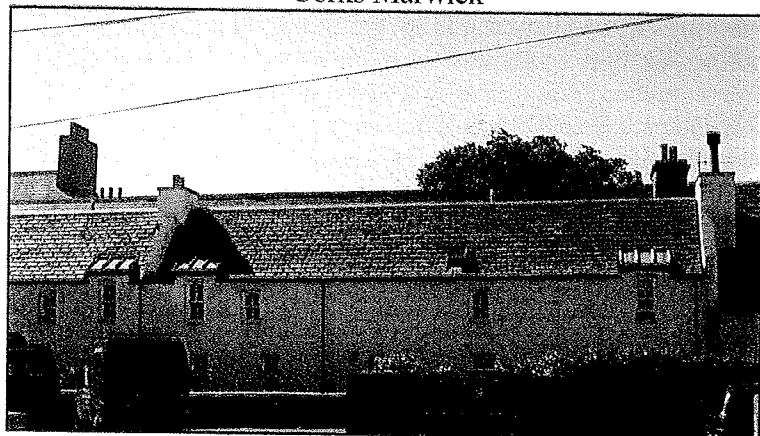
Corks, Marwick. Lovely conversion/conservation of old cottage. H Com.

Upper Housegarth, Quoylooloo. Superb restoration with beautiful roof. Award.

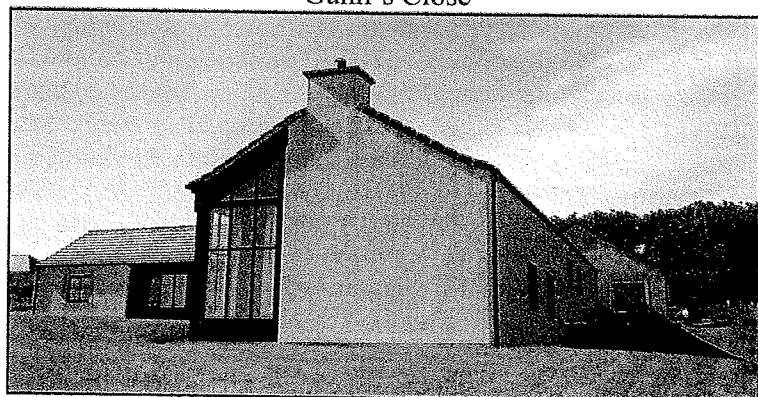
Highly Commended-in Alphabetical order



Corks Marwick

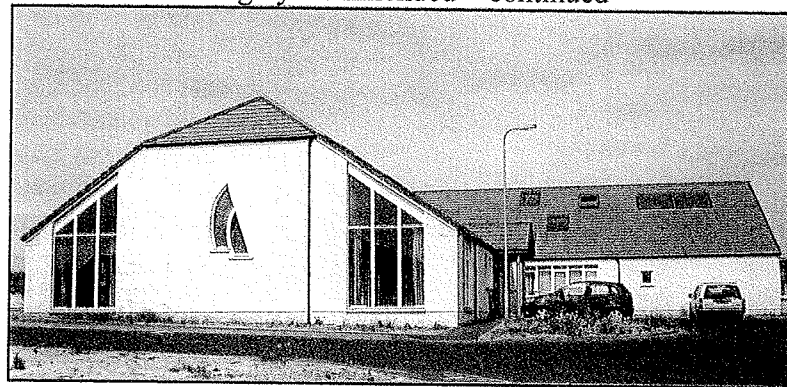


Gunn's Close

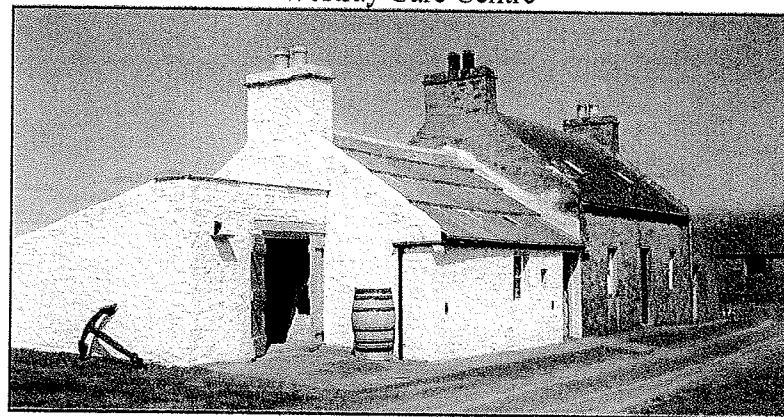


Murrayfield, Finstown

Highly Commended - continued



Westray Care Centre



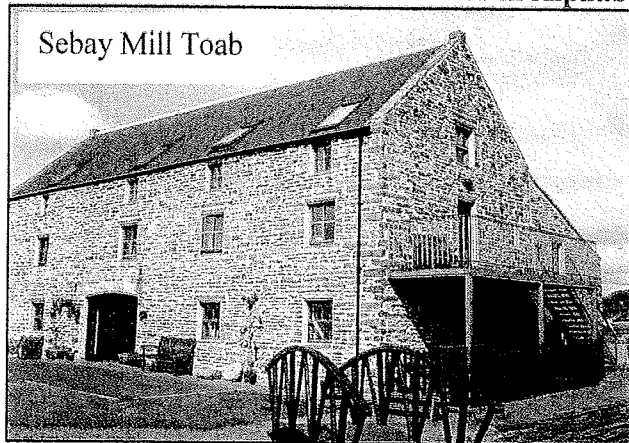
The Smithy, South Ronaldsay



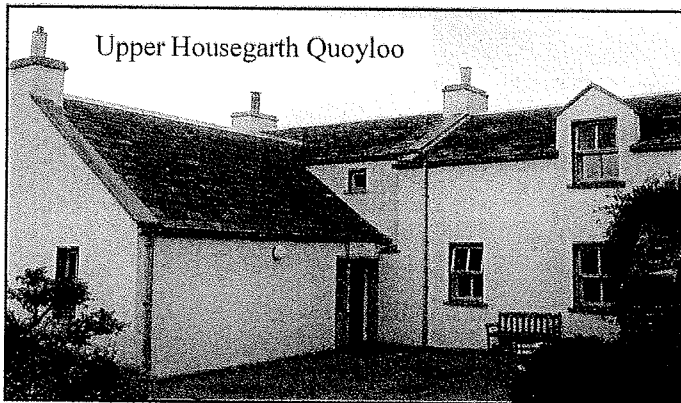
Commended - The Inn, Holm

The Three Award Winners in Alphabetical Order

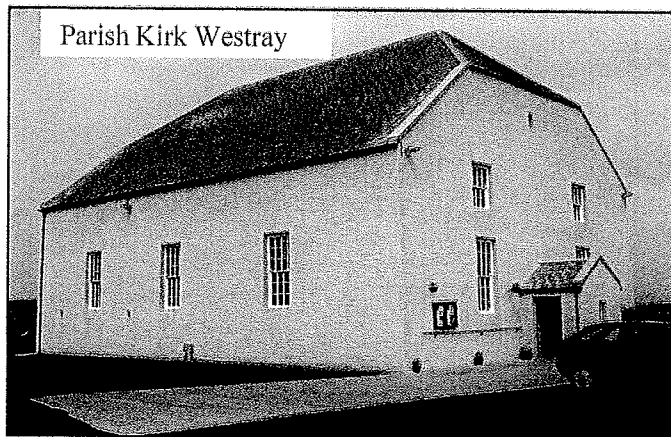
Sebay Mill Toab



Upper Housegarth Quoyloo



Parish Kirk Westray



A day in the life of World Heritage Site Ranger Service by Sandra Miller

In April 2005 Historic Scotland introduced a Ranger Service for the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site. The service consists of one full-time ranger and a six month seasonal ranger. The service is based on the site at Skara Brae. Both posts are supported by funding from Scottish Natural Heritage and this is reflected in the rangers' duties.

For people who have been regular visitors to Historic Scotland sites in Orkney they will already be familiar with both rangers. The full time ranger is Sandra Miller, who is a Cultural Studies graduate and worked most recently at Skara Brae, as did Elaine Clarke, the seasonal ranger who is a very experienced tour guide, and completed her professional tour guiding course in 1997.

For the Ranger Service there is no such thing as a typical day!

The area that we mainly cover is the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness, not only are these monuments part of the WHS but they are surrounded by some of Orkney's most important natural heritage. The day generally begins by checking the diary for forthcoming events and activities and making sure we are prepared for them. These can be varied, for example in September we ran a series of events in conjunction with Orkney's Museums Service for Scottish Archaeology Month. The theme this year was the Iron Age and we led walks to many of the islands' Iron Age sites, including the Broch of Borwick and provided on site interpretation at Rennibister and Grain earth houses. These were very successful events which attracted many local people as well as visitors to the island.

The service also is active in the OCEAN (Orkney Community Environment Awareness Network) group. The group is comprised of a variety of organisations including SNH, RSPB, SEPA and many more, the aim of which is to co-operate, promote and provide environmental education throughout the county. The organisation runs a schools' week in September which provides a week of activities for Orkney's school children with an environmental theme. This year the service worked with the school's Cultural Co-ordinator to provide an activity that involved the movement and building of a huge cardboard version of the Ring of Brodgar! The bulk of our work is however at the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness so much of our time is spent there. Here we provide a welcome, give face to face interpretation of the landscape, natural and cultural history. During June, July and August we ran a series of daily walks, which

explained aspects of the monument, the surrounding landscape and the natural heritage of the area. These were very popular and well attended by visitors to the islands and a few locals. During the winter the walks continue on a weekly basis.

Up until this point there has been no control over visitor movement and behaviour around these sites and visitors are free to walk over and potentially damage areas with sensitive archaeology and ecology. We are also able to monitor the situation and advise visitors on the network of paths and can suggest suitable routes to minimise damage to the sites.

The tourist board predicts an increase in tourism, and visitors to Historic Scotland sites are increasing every year, a survey carried out by the Orkney Tourist Board in 2000 suggested that the Ring of Brodgar was the most visited site within the WHS.

The job of a ranger can be very hectic as you deal with many different people every day but it is very enjoyable and great fun. Most people who visit Orkney come either for the wildlife or the archaeology and the most rewarding part of our job is to be able to show them both in one place!



Orkney's two Rangers
Left to right – Mrs Sandra Miller and Mrs Elaine Clarke

Northlink Holiday, September 2005 by George McDonald

My friend and I made arrangements for this holiday – an Orkney and Shetland Explorer - by phone with the Orkney and Shetland Touring Company and Northlink Holidays, Stromness Business Centre. Our request was dealt with efficiently and helpfully. Four weeks beforehand, we received a copy of our itinerary with the appropriate tickets and invaluable maps and guidebooks for Orkney and Shetland.

Our holiday commenced in Aberdeen boarding the Northlink cruise ferry, *Hrossey*, for the overnight cruise to Lerwick, checking into a comfortable cruise standard, en suite outer twin cabin. En route, we enjoyed an excellent dinner, while observing many well-known points on the coast. Arriving in Lerwick at 07.30, we disembarked the car and enjoyed breakfast on board before motoring south in strong wind and driving rain to visit Jarlshof.

Returning north, after lunch in Sandwick Visitors' Centre we boarded the boat for the 14.00 trip to Moussa. In Moussa the heavens opened and a strong wind blew, spoiling any chance of seeing wildlife. Despite our waterproof clothing we were truly soaked as we walked to the Broch. The 43ft high, 2000 yr old Broch was most impressive and we dried out on our walk back to the boat.

We motored north for an overnight stay at Busta House Hotel and had an excellent evening meal. Next morning we explored Lerwick. In the afternoon, we greatly enjoyed a trip round Bressay and Noss, where wild life expert Dr Jonathan Wills and his crew demonstrated an underwater camera with the picture projected onto a screen, giving us a unique opportunity to observe the underwater life close to the spectacular bird life on Noss.

We then boarded the *Hjaltland* ferry for the evening trip to Kirkwall. Having tasted the culinary delights aboard, we arrived in Kirkwall at 11.30p.m. on a wet, windy evening, grateful for the maps directing us to Foveran Hotel. We had a warm, comfortable en suite bedroom. Inclement weather did not spoil our enjoyment of the next day's trip to Skara Brae and the mysterious stone circles of Brodgar and Stenness. Returning to Foveran we enjoyed a superb dinner.

The last trip was to Westray, by ferry from Kirkwall. As the puffins had all departed we visited the Heritage Centre's permanent exhibition of Westray's history, flora and fauna. After a meal in the Pierowall Hotel we visited Westray Airport, had a walk round the Bay then made the return journey to Kirkwall to enjoy our last night in Foveran.

Our final day, a friend took us an enjoyable tour round St Magnus Cathedral before we made our way to Stromness to walk through the old port. Homeward bound on the *Hammavoe*, the sun shone on the Old Man of Hoy. We reflected on an interesting and enjoyable holiday-Shetland with its inspiring beauty; ancient barren land shaped by frequent storms; magnificent seascapes and towering cliffs.

- Orkney, an island steeped in history; ancient antiquities; buried treasure; wildlife, stunning scenery and charming people who warmly welcomed us to their homeland of which they are justly proud.

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Marking an important publication by Iris Heddle

May 2nd 2005. It had been a lovely day and now it was a jewel of an evening. Many of those who had been concerned, in any way, with the setting up of Orkney's World Heritage Site had been invited to the Skara Brae Visitors' Centre for a reception. The occasion was to mark the publication of *The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site Research Agenda*.

John Graham, the Chief Executive of Historic Scotland, spoke first. He congratulated Jane Downes of Orkney College, Sally Foster of Historic Scotland, Caroline Wickham - Jones and Jude Callister for editing such an excellent example of partnership working. They, with many others who had contributed the articles, had produced an important marker in the management and understanding of Scotland's first, and at the moment, only archaeological World Heritage Site. In the league table for visitors to Scottish Heritage Sites Skara Brae was one of the top four – together with Urquhart, Edinburgh and Stirling castles. The late Daphne Lorimer's part in the setting up of the Orkney site was gratefully acknowledged and there was a message of congratulation from Sir Colin Renfrew who was unable to attend in person.

Jane Downes responded with her personal thanks to all those involved in the publication and said that they were all proud of the result. Their Research Agenda had been approached from a different angle and other people were already looking at it as a model for the way forward. There was a strong tradition of collaboration in Orkney's archaeology and she was now looking forward to even more fame for Orkney.

In a private conversation afterwards Jane said that, whilst it was in production, she had shown the cover of the book to Daphne so that she knew it was dedicated to her. The *Agenda* itself is a fine tribute to a fine lady.

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The Fereday Prize Awards by Sheena Wenham

The high standard of entries for the award has been maintained with a large number of entries from Stromness Academy pupils and some from Kirkwall Grammar School.

The judge this year, Sarah Jane Gibbon, was herself a former winner of the Fereday award first prize and made the following comments on the top three entries.

First Prize – *John Maitland's Little Empire* by Neil Aim.

This project provides an original and insightful account of John Maitland, his family, his pier and his businesses, placing them in their past and present context within the village of Finstown. By combining old photographs, interviews, archive material, family history material and recent photographs, this project clearly and concisely describes John Maitland's contribution to Finstown. The project is well presented and a large amount of original material has been analysed and integrated with a variety of sources to a high standard.

Second Prize – *The Old Man O'Hoy Distillery, Stromness* by Anna Johnstone.

This well presented and artistically designed project covers the history of the distillery in Stromness. The content is well organised and describes the distillery by combining information from interviews, archive sources, maps, distillery merchandise and books. This is a very worthwhile project covering a vanished part of Stromness history which has not been written about in detail before.

Third Prize – *Costies Pavillion* by Rosina Breck

This project provides an excellent account of the history of Costies Pavillion in Kirkwall. The narrative is well written and based mainly on interviews. It is illustrated effectively with old photographs and anecdotes. This is a most interesting and informed account covering the business from its beginnings to the present day.

Very Highly Commended

Schools in Sandwick by Gary Brass

Kirkwall Sheriff Court by Anna Davidson

Barony Hotel by Sarah Davidson

The Pier Arts Centre by Amy Firth

Grandon by Christina Fraser

Orkney Weddings by Lillie Giggle

The Orcadian by Rachel Marcus

Ola Gorie by Lilith Johnstone
The History of the Bahai Faith in Orkney by Erin Miller
Faray by Kirsten Sutherland
Christmas in Orkney by Freya Winter
Graemeshall by Arlene Wood

Marjorie Linklater Writing Award 2006 by A.J.Firth

This year saw 16 entries from both Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy.

As usual the competition is for a piece of original writing which must have some bearing on Orkney. It is open to senior pupils in Kirkwall Grammar School, Stromness Academy and Orkney College students. The Award has produced some sterling work over the years and it is hoped that there might be the possibility of producing a selection in booklet form.

This year's panel of judges were, Mrs. Sheena Wenham, Ron Fergusson and Dr. Bill Hamilton. Representing the family were the well known journalist, author and broadcaster Magnus Linklater, with another family cousin, Mr. Robert Cormack, of Westness House, Rousay presenting the awards.

All entrants who are deemed to be of merit receive certificates stating, 1st Place, Highly Commended and Commended. There is also a book token for the winner.

In the past there have been occasions when entrants have been asked to read their work at suitable public events. These have been much appreciated.

The results are:

1st Place – Jenny Skene of Stromness Academy with *To an Orkney Vole*.

2nd and Highly Commended – Charlotte Platt of Kirkwall Grammar School with *Orkney Sanctuary*.

3rd equal and Commended – Tanya Craigie of Kirkwall Grammar School with *The Lone Grave*.

3rd. equal and Commended – Sarah Jessen of Kirkwall Grammar School with *A New Dawn*.

Once again Orkney Heritage Society is indebted to the panel of judges for sparing their time reading the entries and placing the first four in their order of merit.

MS Therapy Centre by John Chesters

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy which involves breathing oxygen under pressure has been shown to help some, although not all, people with Multiple Sclerosis. The creation of the Orkney MS Therapy Centre was inspired by a desire to provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy to people with MS in Orkney. A group originally based around the Kirkness family from Finstown organised the conversion of part of the old slaughter house at the rear of the Crafty car park to hold a diving decompression chamber. The chamber arrived in Orkney on the St Ola on Friday



11th January 1985 and was shortly afterwards manoeuvred into the fledgling Centre. Modifications were made to the chamber to allow its occupants to breathe pure oxygen through masks while at a pressure equivalent to a sea dive to 16 or 24 feet.

The Centre still provides people with MS the opportunity to see whether they would benefit from hyperbaric oxygen. To assess this, subjects must first obtain medical approval and then users undergo an initial familiarisation and treatment period. This consists of 1 hour in the chamber per day for 5 days per week. This regime lasts for four weeks and then they generally attend once a week for an hour session at pressure.

Continuing provision of this facility remains a prime role of the MS Therapy Centre but the Centre's activities have been extended. In 1986, a physiotherapist was employed to help ease the physical difficulties which are a common feature of MS. In 1989, Freda Norquay took over this role and still provides physiotherapy along with much very helpful advice based on her accumulated experience.

In recent years, these therapies have been supplemented with access to aroma therapy and massage treatments provided by Margaret Rinder and Dawn Davidson, and reflexology (Margaret Rinder) while Caroline Moody provides homeopathy. Together, these help to ease many of the problems commonly experienced by people with MS.

The Centre is both a registered charity and a limited liability company. Its hyperbaric service is run entirely by volunteers and is financed partially by contributions from users and substantially by donations and fund raising activities. We intend to continue to provide these facilities and anyone prepared to support the Centre as a volunteer with running the chamber or with fund raising would be very welcome. Full training in the operation of the chamber would be provided and anyone interested in helping should contact R. Adams (874693).

Orkney Countryside Committee by Alistair Tulloch

Some of this has been gleaned from the retiring chairman, Mr. Meek's, report at the A.G.M. Over the past year the above Committee has met several times, the matters being dealt with related basically solely to the issue of access, as the development of other strategies by OIC was still awaited.

In February, Julia Partridge of SNH gave us a presentation on the long-awaited Scottish Outdoor Access Code and committee members had the chance to run through the document and make constructive comments as to how it might be improved. The Committee had always felt that an Orkney version of the SNH code would be required and, at this same meeting, Christine Skene from OIC Planning was able to table a draft version of this for comment. Impressions of the latter document were especially favourable and members looked forward to the finished version.

Since last year's report, 2005 was rather a quiet year in terms of the amount of committee business that had to be dealt with, and contrasted strongly with the previous few years when we were not only getting the Committee established as the Local Access Forum, but also dealing with a run of OIC strategy documents that required our input. A draft version of Orkney Outdoor Access Strategy was presented and, due to its importance and implementation, it was evaluated and monitored. After comments had been submitted, Mrs Skene was of the opinion that most of these were quite positive.

On the issue of the desirability to encourage more cycling, the dangers associated with this on some of the main roads due to the heavy traffic and comparative narrowness of many thoroughfares were pointed out. Consultation with horse-riding groups showed how much wider created paths would need to be to accommodate carriage driving, but it would not be necessary for all core paths to cater for this. As the local access forum, we have a role to make people more aware of the issues of using paths through fields where there are animals. Action was needed on access to archaeological sites, an area which needed more work done to it. Likewise, access to lochs for fishing and other pursuits would have to be arranged, not forgetting to be also aware of the possibility of cultural heritage within the lochs etc. Education would be needed to the public if there were any question of biological dangers from livestock.

Adam Streeter-Smith, Development Officer from Paths For All Partnership, was present at one meeting to put forward their aims to support access officers and what they do to create well-designed networks of multi-use paths in the most appropriate areas, and suitable for all types of users regardless of age and ability. He pointed out how some access forums had presence on websites to inform the public on a range of issues, this being missing from Orkney's Local Access Forum.

A Consultation Draft on Renewable Energy Planning Framework for Orkney was forward for discussion and comments on 14th November. Progress and the input here should be available at some future meeting.

The changing structure of tourism, where Orkney Tourist Board had been merged into Visit Scotland meant considerable changes in the administration of tourism in Orkney. A new Orkney Tourism Group would be set up, and it was thought that this new group would be a more appropriate representative of tourism.

2006 seems likely to be a busier year as a number of these OIC initiatives reach fruition and, of course, other relevant items are dealt with. I feel that it is quite important that OHS is continually represented on this committee, since topics which relate to the Society often arise.

ORKNEY HERITAGE SOCIETY EYNHALLOW TRIP 2006

Subject to weather conditions, this year's **Eynhallow Trip** will take place on **Monday 10th July, leaving Tingwall Pier at 7.15 p.m. and returning from Eynhallow at 10.15 p.m.**

Cost is £12.00 per adult and £6.00 for under 12's – No concessions as this is a Society Charter. **Tickets are on sale from Kirkwall and Stromness Tourist Offices as from Monday 10th July.** Refunds are dependent on the trip being cancelled by the society.

As usual an archaeologist will be there to give a talk on the ruined chapel. An R.S.P.B. representative has been invited by the society to discuss the varied bird population. There are no roads on this uninhabited island, therefore suitable footwear is strongly advised.

NO DOGS PERMITTED.

NOTE: - Tickets are in two parts. The outward half is handed over on boarding at Tingwall. The return half is handed over when boarding at Eynhallow. If it is bad weather, telephone **Evie 751 360** to confirm sailing.

**Orkney Heritage Society, c/o Mr. A.J.Firth,
Tel. (01856) 872537**

Financial Report, 2004/5 by Neil McCance

Before presenting my final Finance Report I will give a few thoughts on being the Society's Treasurer for the last ten years while the memory is still able to cope with such a concept. Perhaps the Report should be titled something along the lines of:

"TEN YEARS A TREASURER AND STILL SANE (well sort of)".

I remember being asked by Daphne Lorimer to be Treasurer and, as many others have found, it was impossible to refuse her. When The Orkney Archaeology Trust was formed not only was I a signatory to the original Trust Deed it was also assumed that I would be the Treasurer, at least I have no memory of having been asked or agreeing. Somehow I also found myself as Treasurer of the Neolithic Conference, three accounts simultaneously! Having completed the accounting for the Neolithic Conference, having handed over the OAT accounts to Angela Taylor I am now handing the Society's accounts to Inga Scholes and, by the time this Report appears in print will have returned to a place in the rear rank.

THE REPORT

Members attending the AGM were able to scrutinise the Statement of Income and Expenditure for the past financial year audited this year for the first time by Mr John Laughton the recently appointed Manager of the Clydesdale Bank. Opening Balances were £63,988 and Closing Balances were £45,462 the difference being mostly accounted for by the purchase of another Abbey National Charities Bond for £10,000, interest on Charities Bond being higher than interest on the normal special interest accounts. As usual interest accounted for a major part of the Society's income. Net profit on the Eynhallow trips for 2004 and 2005 totalled £1,454. Members' subscriptions dropped to £534 due mainly to the number of Members taking out Life Membership the previous year.

Major outgoings include £1,656 for insurance of which £994 was recovered from OAT. Grants totalling £11,246 were paid to the Kirkwall Community Council towards the cost of relocating the Groatie Hoose. £9,746 from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation received in 2004, £1,000 from the Manifold Trust and £500 from the Society funded these grants. Grants totalling £540 were paid to the Saskatchewan First Nation visit and to Historic Scotland. All in all 2004/05 was not such a busy financial year for the Society as 2003/2004.

A Review of the Three books from the Sagalands Project:-

The World of Orkneyinga Saga, edited by Olwyn Owen (£20).

The Shorter Orkneyinga Saga, by Tom Muir (£10.50)

Orkney in the Sagas, by Tom Muir and other contributors, edited by Steve Callaghan (£10 soft back, £12 hardback).

The 'Sagalands Project' was a European-funded scheme designed to develop a tourist trail by strengthening the links between the countries which share a common Norse heritage. It involved the Scandinavian countries, Orkney, Shetland, Faroe, Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland. Part of Orkney's contribution has been the publication of these three very different books. The smallest of the books, *The Shorter Orkneyinga Saga* by Tom Muir, is a re-telling of stories from *Orkneyinga saga* and is evidently aimed at an upper Primary School age-group, although no doubt it will also appeal to older people. One useful task for Orkney Museums and Heritage, the publisher, would be to try to ensure that the book actually reaches its target audience of young people.

The re-telling of saga to attract a new audience is always worthwhile: it was done successfully a hundred years ago by Catherine Spence in *Earl Rognvald and his Forebears*, and more recently by Eric Linklater when he recounted the adventures of Sweyn Asleifsson. In fact this re-working of existing material is what was done by the saga-writer himself when he collected old stories and committed them to writing 800 years ago.

The second book, *Orkney in the Sagas*, is also by Tom Muir with additional chapters by other contributors and it is edited by Steve Callaghan (£10 soft back, £12 hardback). It is basically a similar collection of stories from the sagas, but is aimed at an adult audience. This is a rather more difficult undertaking since adults might read the saga for themselves, and where stories are re-told readers might look for a bit more discussion of their form and content.

The editors have had the very good idea of interleaving these saga-stories with short chapters on a variety of themes such as Viking graves, coin hoards, ships, horses, runes and descriptions of half a dozen important archaeological sites. These chapters help the reader to appreciate that the saga has to be understood in the context of archaeology and whatever other evidence is available. Most chapters provide an excellent and concise description, although there are one or two where the interested tourist might look for rather more information.

The third book, *The World of Orkneyinga Saga*, edited by Olwyn Owen, is a large, handsome and well illustrated volume reflecting well on the standards of the

Orcadian which is printer and publisher. At a price of only £20 it also reflects the input of the European funding to the project.

This book is less directly based on stories from *Orkneyinga saga* but it begins with William Thomson's discussion of how much history and how much myth is to be found in the saga's story of King Harald Fairhair and Torf Einar, and it ends with James Barrett's discussion of the career of Svein Asleifarson who figures so largely in the second half of the saga. Between these chapters there are papers on literature, folklore, place-names, archaeology, artefacts and human remains. There is a danger that papers on so many different subjects written by different authors might be rather incoherent, but in this book they seem to hang together well, and indeed provide samples of different disciplines which contribute to Viking studies. In a short review it is possible to mention only a few contributions although all are worth reading.

Raymond Lamb re-assesses the belief that an early phase of Viking settlement involved *nesnám*, the seizure and fortification of headlands in order to create pirate bases, and he also discusses the difficulties Viking settlers would have faced in navigating difficult Orkney waters unless they were able to draw on the local knowledge of the native population.

Two papers deal with Birsay: Anne Brundle examines the assumption that the Norse took over an important Pictish power-centre, and Barbara Crawford sets out the case for locating Thorfinn's residence and his cathedral of Christchurch on the Brough of Birsay rather than in the present village which in recent years has come to be regarded as the likely site.

There are two papers on St Magnus. Judith Jesch and Theya Molleson use the relevant texts and an examination of the bones to study the relics believed to be those of St Magnus and St Rognvald. Their paper comes to the conclusion that there are good grounds for believing the relics are indeed those of the saints. The other chapter which deals with St Magnus is by Haki Antonsson and it describes the saint's cult which was the subject of his recent doctoral research.

Besides strengthening tourist links these books ought to revive interest in the saga in Orkney. After generating such great enthusiasm in the days of Storer Clouston, Alfred Johnston and Hugh Marwick, saga studies in Orkney have been rather in the doldrums despite all the scholarly work which has been undertaken elsewhere. These books ought to reawaken an appreciation of the importance of our saga heritage.

Review by Steve Callaghan of "Roughing It – The Story of John Rae as a Boy" by Iris E. Heddle.

This lovely book was conceived by Iris, as filling a gap in provision for very young readers, and for parents wanting books to read and discuss with young children. It is simply written, with just one sentence or phrase per page, but what a wealth of material to look at and discuss in the pictures! Each page is a work of art, meticulously researched and executed, with amazing attention to detail in the landscape and relating to costume, animals, wildflowers and architecture. Iris has really put some work into researching the fabrics and style of costumes, visiting museums for authenticity, then making costumes for sitters to model. She even had a model for the Newfoundland Hound! Iris' illustrations of the Hall of Clestrain, where John Rae was born and raised, are especially good.

As with all other children's books produced by Orkney Museums and Heritage, a free copy went to each of Orkney's schools, complete with a teacher's pack produced by Sheila Garson, Cultural Co-ordinator, Heritage. This included a Big Book version of the book, containing fabulous large sized prints of Iris' original paintings and drawings. It also contains suggestions for discussions with children about each page. A parent's pack is also available for sale in The Orkney Museum.

Well done, Iris! We look forward to your next project.

Tam's Tally of Orkney Books 2006

Available at Stromness Books & Prints 1, Graham Place, Stromness

The Wind Tamer	P.R. Morrison	Bloomsbury	12.99
Amande's Bed	John Aberdeen	Thirsty Books	7.99
Demo	Alison Miller	Hamish Hamilton	12.99
Changlings Book 1: Dragons & Demons	James A. McVean	James McVean	6.99
Collected Poems	George MackayBrown	John Murray	35.00
The Long, Long Night	Hazel S. Parkins	H. & M. Parkins	10.99
Winter Solstice at Maeshowe	Joanna Ramsay	Galdragon Press	2.50
Daffodil Time	Orkney Poets	Galdragon Press	2.99
Rhymin'iscences Fae Angus & Orkney	The Newtyle Rhymer	Jim Brown	6.99
Minehowe: Fieldwork & Excavations 2000 – 2005	Stephen Harrison (ed.)	FOAT	5.95

Black Saturday: Royal Oak Tragedy	Alexander McKee	Cerberus	9.99
U-Boat Commander	Günter Prien	Cerberus	9.99
Scapa Flow: From Graveyard to Resurrection	Ludwig Von Reuter, Simon Mills (ed.)	Wordsmith	14.95
Whit Like the Day	Gregor Lamb	Bellavista	16.95
Carnival of the Animals	Gregor Lamb	Capall Bann	10.95
Almost An Island: Story of an Orkney Parish	Deerness Social History Group	Deerness Social History Group	14.95
Dead Right: Life on an Orkney Island Farm	Julia Welstead	Treb Publishing	15.00
William Inkster	Leslie Larnder	Jeremy Mills	11.95
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